



## Agricultural Business Planning Courses

MDAR offers three course levels for participants who are 1) thinking about farming, 2) gearing up to start, with secure access to land, or 3) already operating Massachusetts agricultural enterprise. Our courses are not offered online because participants confirm greater benefit when they have a peer group to share ideas with over several consecutive weeks. Enrollment is limited to facilitate discussion. Attendance by the registrant (or an informed substitute) is required at all scheduled sessions. Fees are kept low through MDAR support, and a partner may attend at no additional cost.

**Explorers** - For those who are just thinking about getting into farming or are expanding a hobby to an income-generating scale: *"Exploring the Small Farm Dream"* offers guidance and feedback to help make informed decisions about whether or not to take the plunge - and how to proceed in the first stages of feasibility. Five sessions over 6 weeks on weekday evenings. Cost per enterprise - \$125.

**Planners** – For those a step beyond Explorer who have a strong sense of what they intend to do and where: *"Planning for Start-up"* is a gut check before making significant investments of time and money. It requires completion of Explorer, or equivalent programs and experience. Planners have already made the decision to farm on a revenue generating scale, and have secured the land and initial finances to do so. Six sessions over 8 weeks on Saturday mornings. Cost per enterprise - \$175.

**Established Farmers** – For those already operating a commercial agricultural enterprise and in need of a comprehensive business plan. *"Tilling the Soil of Opportunity"* offers a chance to assess, regroup, plan 5 years ahead and finance expansion, or clarify transfer/succession. The course draws on peer experience, Instructor knowledge and guest speakers. This course is USDA/FSA certified for "Borrower Training". Graduates may qualify for individual post-course technical assistance. Ten sessions over 11 weeks on weekday evenings. Cost per enterprise - \$225.

We offer each course once per year, in both an eastern and a western location if local demand exists. Registration is rolling, with those who have completed an application on file receiving priority when locations and dates are finalized.

Email information/application requests to [rick.chandler@state.ma.us](mailto:rick.chandler@state.ma.us)